



Dixon Prison Expands Mental Health Unit

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DIXON (WIFR) -- Nearly 100 new jobs are coming to Dixon and what those workers will be doing will have a direct impact on every one in Illinois.

Inmates at the Dixon prison are cleaning the floors, preparing this building for a new group of prisoners. Parts of the corrections center are under construction as it expands its mental health unit.

"From psychotic disorders to depressive disorders to adjustment disorders, we have them all," Dr. Melvin Hinton, the Chief of Mental Health of the Illinois Department of Corrections, said.

The Illinois Department of Corrections is consolidating its mental health services in four state prisons, including Dixon.

"Dixon was a great candidate because of its experience in providing mental health care to many inmates here, somewhere between 600 and 850," IDOC Director of Communications Tom Shaer, said.

The Stateline facility received more than \$1.5 million from the state to pay for 675 additional beds and nearly 100 new workers.

"We bring in more professionals, we shrink our case load, we give people more attention, diagnose better, give better treatment, outcomes are better, people are more comfortable," Dr. Hinton, said.

Some buildings on the prison campus are being converted to residential treatment units with rooms for individual and group therapy. Others will become office space for the new health care workers.

The state is required to offer health care for inmates and the level of treatment they receive could impact our community.

"They're going to come back to their neighborhoods, to their communities and they're going to live, they're going to live there. We hope they're going to come out healthier, we hope they're

going to come out with more of a willingness to engage in a therapeutic process," Dr. Hinton said.

The hiring process for those 75 to 90 jobs the expansion created has already started. All of the work at the Dixon Prison is expected to be done by early next year.